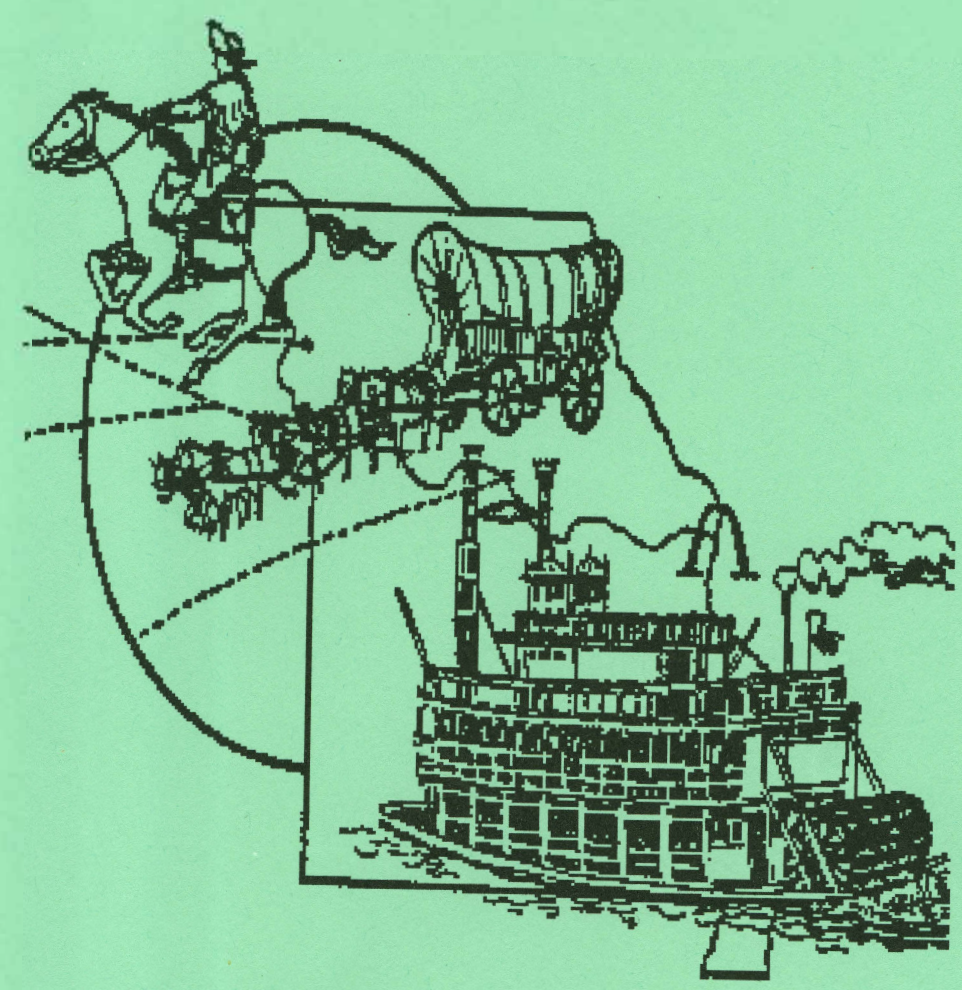

Toward The Setting Sun

2nd Series, Vol. 12, No. 1 Fall, 2013

TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference

The United Methodist Church

Second Series

Volume 12, Number 1 Fall, 2013

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FROM THE EDITOR

The fall of 2013 – if memory serves me correctly, it was 30 years ago that the first issue of this Journal come out. The years in between have been quite a journey, both for the publication and for its editor. There was a period in the '90s when we did not publish. I was in Nashville, TN, at the United Methodist Publishing House and had to give up the editorship for a while. The persons who volunteered to take it up – well, let's just say when we retired and came back to Missouri, I volunteered to take up the Journal again. The first response from the Commission members was, "you do know that the last three editors all died before they were able to get an issue completed?" That was 13 years ago, and we're still going strong. What you hold in your hand is the Second Series, Volume 12, No. 1.

The articles in this issue cover a wide range. Elizabeth Terry has written a masterful article on German Methodism in the St. Louis area. It is one of those articles that raises questions about the church and society, and how the two intertwine. Elizabeth is a member of the Conference Commission on Archives and History, a member of Salem-in-Ladue United Methodist Church, and the archivist for that congregation. We are grateful for this paper and look forward to more of her work in the future.

Avis Morton's article shares memories of her service as an A-3, a short-term missionary in Africa. (Three years, hence the A – 3.) Avis is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Kansas City.

The final article is excerpted from an unpublished manuscript of my last book, a biography of Andrew Monroe. Monroe was a clergy member of the Missouri Conference from 1824 until his death in 1871. This article is about his early years in ministry in the Tennessee and Kentucky conferences, just before he came to Missouri. The focus is on his travels with Bishop McKendree from Nashville to Baltimore for the 1820 General Conference and all the excitement (literally) of that conference.

We are always looking for new ideas for articles about Missouri Methodism. Please share yours with me at jogooch@aol.com. If you would like to write, but aren't sure about a topic, I'd be happy to "talk" with you. I have a "wish list," and would like to have you respond to it.

John O. Gooch

SALEM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:

THE HISTORY OF SALEM'S GERMAN CONGREGATION AND ITS COMPLEX POSITION WITHIN ST. LOUIS' GERMAN CULTURE

ELIZABETH TERRY

It is surprising that the lovely brick church in suburban St. Louis has such a story to tell. Its past, however, lends a powerful narrative to the history of St. Louis. Long ago, Salem United Methodist Church's congregants' loyalties to church doctrine isolated them from the greater population. Theirs is a story of belief, and, surely, resorting to plenty of prayer.

Pierre Laclede sailed up the Mississippi River from New Orleans in 1763. He established his fur trading post on a bluff at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. By the time Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States in 1803, St. Louis was a thriving little French village.[1] By 1818, the village had two thousand inhabitants, two-thirds of them French. Legendary St. Louis French families like Chouteau, Soulard and Page lived near Carondelet Road. They were a tightly-knit, enterprising French community.[2]

Slowly, German immigrants began to trickle into St. Louis. By 1835, there were enough Germans to found the first German newspaper, *Anzeiger des Westens.* In 1837, a German school opened in St. Louis, even before the city established its first public school.[3]

Ludwig Jacoby, the founder of what is now Salem United Methodist Church, was born in Germany in 1813. He was raised by devoutly Jewish parents in the Alt-Strelitz area of Mecklenburg, Germany. In 1835, Jacoby was baptized into Christianity by a Lutheran pastor, and he ultimately emigrated to the United States around 1838. After becoming a Methodist in Cincinnati, Jacoby married a fellow German immigrant, Amalie, a Catholic-turned-Methodist.[4]

The Methodist Church of Cincinnati sent Jacoby to St. Louis as a circuit rider in 1841. Upon arrival, he rented an "old, abandoned Presbyterian mission church" on Seventh and Biddle Streets and began holding worship services. With twenty-two members, Jacoby's church became one of the first German Methodist churches west of

the Mississippi. In 1842, the little congregation purchased property on Wash Street, near Eleventh Street, and built their new 32' X 50' church. Five years later, the congregation built themselves a new, larger church building on that same location. There, Jacoby also began a German school for children, operated by the church.[5]

In the meantime, Jacoby's home country of Germany was in turmoil; its people faced the crisis of overpopulation, poverty, and economic and political upheaval. Following the failed Revolution of 1848, Germans came to America in droves. The Germans, called the 'Damned Dutch' by many St. Louis natives, invaded St. Louis' Frenchtown, bringing with them their oom-pah bands and their beer brewing skills.[6]

Between 1847 and 1850, the population of St. Louis increased by thirty thousand people. "After 1850, the German atmosphere was such that a person wandering through some of the streets could believe that he had been transported to Germany, since he heard only German spoken."[7] By 1853, St. Louis was home to six German newspapers and seven German societies purposed for easing the transition for newly arrived immigrants. By 1860, the population of St. Louis had grown to 77,860 people. There were thirty-eight private German schools in St. Louis, and the public schools began adding German studies into their curriculum.[8]

In his book on the history of Salem, Robert Appel writes about the struggles of Jacoby and his early congregation in St. Louis. "Roughnecks first heckled, then threw rocks at the doors of the church during services."[9] One evening during a prayer meeting at the church, those roughnecks threw rocks at the Jacoby home. The rocks broke windows and even landed in their baby's crib – thankfully, the baby was at the meeting with her parents. Writes Appel, "Shotgun and pistol fire rattled the windows. One Sunday the banisters were smeared with cow dung, and on another Sunday the stairways were covered with tar and pitch."[10] On yet another occasion, Jacoby dared preach in the marketplace. A riot ensued, and he was saved only by a fellow minister.[11]

This attitude toward Jacoby, the German minister who preached in the German language to his German congregation, paralleled the general feeling toward German immigrants in St. Louis. Many of this fresh wave of German immigrants were impoverished and unskilled. They lived anywhere they could in St. Louis' Frenchtown, filling tenement houses and living in squalor. Others, however, opened successful shops along Carondelet Road and Lafayette Avenue, displacing the former, often French,

business owners. Through the 1850s, the Germans were forced to defend themselves against French St. Louis natives and even the Irish.[12]

In April 1852, the municipal elections produced riots between German and non-German citizens around Soulard Market, Seventh Street, and Park Avenue. On that day, a fire was set to a German home and it burned down. The violence was finally curbed by the military, which kept the angry mob from storming the office of *Anzeiger des Westens.* In another incident, the Know-Nothings, a political movement comprised of anti-immigrant, "native" Americans, attacked homes and stores for two days. The Know-Nothings were eventually suppressed by military units and an armed citizens' posse.[13]

Native St. Louisans also found fault with German political practices. Given their European backgrounds, they were familiar with hierarchy of authority rather than independent political participation, and they placed personal loyalties over abstract regulation. Immigrants therefore directly contributed to St. Louis' corrupt political system by voting for ward bosses and city officials who not only understood the immigrants' issues but assured them their loyalty. The German immigrants aligned themselves with Democrats, who preferred laissez faire and opposed governmental interference.[14]

But mostly, it was the beer. Beer brewing and beer drinking was a staple of German culture. Yet for "native" Americans, drinking was viewed as an ethnic and inferior practice.[15] At first glance, the violence toward Jacoby and his little German congregation was simply a microcosm of the greater unrest. But consider this: the "roughnecks" who threw rocks at Jacoby's home and mobbed him as he preached in the marketplace were German immigrants.

How could this be?

Jacoby was a Methodist, and Methodists opposed drinking. Jacoby was saved from the marketplace mob by a fellow minister. A fellow *Methodist* minister. And the mob was instigated by German bartenders. Writes Appel of Jacoby, "The German press had warned him about preaching in the slums and that the people would find ways to stop him if he persisted."[16]

Methodists' aversion to drinking harkened back to the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. In a mid-18th century sermon, Wesley called alcohol "liquid fire" and brewers "poisoners general." He wrote, "God made you human, but you have converted yourself into an animal." John Wesley condemned brewers, saying they drove drinking customers "to hell." He said,

> "...there is a God in heaven. Therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like those whom thou has destroyed, body and soul, thy memorial shall perish with thee!"[17]

In essence, Wesley preached that God will punish the brewers in the afterlife as they punished their drinking customers while on earth. Is this the type of rhetoric Ludwig Jacoby used in 19th century St. Louis? No wonder he angered fellow German immigrants. Beer drinking was a fundamental element of German culture, and St. Louis brewers Adolphus Busch and William J. Lemp were icons.

Considering the violence directed at Jacoby by the St. Louis Germans, it seems likely he had been channeling Wesley, who raged against brewers: "And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men [who drink it]?" The founder of Methodism even cursed the brewers' homes:

> "Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: the curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell!"[18]

Cursed or not, the Busch and Lemp mansions in South St. Louis were as grandiose as the men themselves. Yet, Jacoby preached on. In his history of Salem, Robert Appel writes, "It can thus be said that the early Salem Methodists were very busy in the work of conversion."[19]

In spite of the challenges, Salem's early church thrived. In 1873, the congregation built a new church at the corner of Fifteenth and Wash Streets which became known as the "Cathedral of German Methodism." To provide for other neighborhoods, the church began other branches of Methodist Episcopal churches throughout St. Louis during the last half of the 19th century. The home church on Wash and Fifteenth served as the "mother church" for its branch churches as well as its outreaching missions. The church, re-decorated in 1894, was so beautiful it became a

tourist-draw during the 1904 World's Fair. The congregation was still primarily made up of German-Americans. And, the majority of sermons were still conducted in German.[20] Within the walls of the church, members probably discussed one of the biggest political issues of the day.

The Temperance Movement was in full swing by the latter half of the 19th century. Proponents of temperance viewed drinking as a leading contributor to the ills of urban society. Domestic conflict plagued over-crowded St. Louis, teeming with working-class, beer-drinking German immigrants. They sought camaraderie among their native countrymen over their steins in saloons. German families gathered in beer gardens, a tradition brought with them from the Fatherland, to picnic and visit on Sundays. Naturally, German saloon owners and brewers employed a great many German-Americans.

The Anti-Saloon League was one of the biggest temperance organizations of the late 19th century. The league raised money and entered the political arena. In fact, "the Anti-Saloon League's board of directors was made of Methodist and Baptist ministers." It is likely that Salem's minister and parishioners were members of the Anti-Saloon League.[21]

In 1883, a new state law (Jefferson City was controlled by Republicans) required non-essential revenue-producing businesses to close their doors on Sundays. This so-called Sunday Law targeted breweries and saloons, infuriating brewers and saloon keepers.[22] St. Louis brewer and German immigrant William J. Lemp said, "Every man has some rights which others must respect, and I consider this desire [to drink] one of those rights." St. Louis saloon keeper and German immigrant Tony Faust said, "I feel that my business is a legitimate one, and I do not propose to be regarded as a criminal."[23]

A fellow German saloon keeper also noted,

> "I have a great respect for a sincere, high moral churchman, but he has no right to force his opinions on me, nor has he the right to legislate against my business, which is a lawful one."[24]

Another St. Louis saloon keeper, Pat Carmody, said most eloquently,

> "I am thoroughly in sympathy with all truly religious people and will aid them in any way that I can to uphold the law, but I have no use

for hypocrites who use religion as a cloak. The Liquor Dealers' Association is willing to meet the Sabbatarians half way. They should have their part of the day and we ours."[25]

In response, Reverend Werlein, president of the Sabbath Association of St. Louis, railed,

> "It is the aim... of violators of law to endeavor to debauch the minds...of the people down to their level. We are engaged in a warfare against the oppressor in the interests of the oppressed. ...we must do something practical for poor, suffering humanity."[26]

Keep in mind, the temperance movement made for strange bedfellows. Salem's early congregations sided with reformers such as Jane Addams, who saw "the devastating effect that drunkenness had on the urban poor." The Industrial Workers of the World, who believed that "liquor was a capitalist weapon used to keep the working classes in a stupor" bedded with the Ku Klux Klan, whose anti-liquor sentiment stemmed from their hatred of immigrants.[27]

In 1905, Salem's congregation again relocated. They built themselves a new church at Page Boulevard and Pendleton Avenue in St. Louis, named Salem Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation held three services; only one in German.[28] By this time, most of Salem's marriage, baptism, and death records were no longer written in German, but in English. That the congregation dropped the word "German" from their title is indicative of the assimilation of German-Americans into St. Louis society. Salem's population was still primarily made up of German immigrants, but many were second generation. Like other children of immigrants in St. Louis, their first language was English.

The English language newspapers in St. Louis encouraged public schools to omit the German language from their curriculum. The German newspapers, *Anzeiger des Westens* and the *Westliche Post*, put up a fight. The St. Louis German-American community differed from other cities with large German-American populations, such as Cincinnati and Milwaukee. Those in St. Louis lacked unity, largely due to geography. The St. Louis German-American community spread its population north and, especially, south, along the Mississippi River, making unified German neighborhoods nearly impossible. The issue of language was put to a vote by the public school board and, as

an indicator of the lack of cohesion of St. Louis' German population, the Germans did not turn out to vote. The school board passed the issue in 1887.[29]

Collectively, the St. Louis German-American community was cohesive on only a few occasions. The first was during the Civil War. St. Louis Germans were nearly unanimously opposed to slavery. This included Salem's congregation:

> "Although the church records reveal little about the issue of slavery or the sympathies of the membership during the Civil War, we can conclude that the Salem Methodist congregation remained true to the union..."[30]

Despite the many ways St. Louis German-Americans showed a lack of cohesion, they found common ground in celebrating their heritage. In a rare show of unity, they observed German Day in 1885. This four-day celebration of German veterans included fireworks, concerts and a beer garden (discriminating Methodists aside).[31] An equally rare instance of cohesion occurred on German Day at the 1904 World's Fair, an event that included parades, music, and speeches celebrating German-Americans' dual ethnicities and patriotism for both countries. Said one dignitary,

> "We German-Americans are the hyphen between Germany and America. We present the living demonstration that we may be devoted to the new fatherland and yet preserve a revered love for the old."[32]

During the years leading up to the United States' entrance into World War I, many German-Americans found themselves in a difficult position. The Fatherland was at war with France and England. France was the "historic enemy of Germany" while German-Americans associated England with Puritans – those who fueled the temperance movement in America. Though the United States claimed neutrality, it seemed to favor the Allies.[33] With family and friends still in Germany, many German-Americans in St. Louis joined the Neutrality League to protest the U.S. shipments of arms the Allies.[34] The women of Salem sent toys and children's clothing on "mercy ships" bound for war-torn Europe.[35]

Such acts were soon viewed as displays of pro-German sympathies. There were a few incidents which marred the psyche of St. Louisans; the "Black Tom" incident in 1916 was particularly damaging. A pier laden with munitions destined for the Allies exploded in New York harbor, detonated by German saboteurs. The shrapnel scarred

the Statue of Liberty, shattered windows in Times Square and rocked the Brooklyn Bridge.[36]

Such high-profile incidents were relatively rare, but they were frequent enough to poison public opinion against German-Americans. By the time the United States entered the war in 1917, allegiance toward anything German was considered disloyal. To sanitize itself of the enemy, St. Louis schools pulled German language classes as an elective from their curriculum, removed books written in German from the public library shelves, and changed street names: Berlin Avenue became Pershing Avenue. German language newspapers were required to submit their articles to the postmaster for censorship. Ordinary German-American citizens dared not risk being overheard discussing war news in the streets, lest they find themselves facing charges of espionage which would land them in the state penitentiary.[37]

Additionally, the war years coincided with the march toward Prohibition. "The great enemy was Germany – and the brewers were seen by the Prohibitionists as tools of the Kaiser."[38]

Nearly eighty years after Jacoby's arrival in St. Louis, members of Salem found themselves in a similar juxtaposition as Salem's founders: because of the war they were discriminated against as German-Americans, and due to Prohibition they were discriminated against by German-Americans.

Tensions eased after the war, and once again Salem's congregation built a new church in 1925, located at Kingshighway Boulevard and Cote Brilliante Avenue in St. Louis. That same year marked the "end of German Methodism." The St. Louis German Conference merged into the St. Louis Conference. Quotes Appel, "German Methodism was an important agency of Americanization. It was something more. It was part of America."[39]

In 1941, the last German issue of the Methodist Church magazine was printed. Abstinence from alcohol was part of Methodist doctrine as late as the 1950s. In 1958, Salem moved to its current location in St. Louis County, on Lindbergh Boulevard and Daniel Boone Expressway (now Highway 40). The congregation built its chapel first, followed by many additions to its house of worship. Today's thriving, mission-oriented Salem United Methodist Church, where all are welcome, was built upon the backbone of

a complex and often controversial German history. A legacy of perseverance strengthens its membership still today.

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[1] John Rodabough, *Frenchtown* (St. Louis: Sunrise Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), 9.
[2] Ibid., 13-18.
[3] Frances Hurd Stadler, *St. Louis: From Laclede to Land Clearance* (St. Louis: Radio Station KSD and Kriegshauser Mortuaries, 1962), 26; Gerhard K. Friesen and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas* (Hanover, NH: Clark University Press, 1977), 292-293.
[4] Robert S. Appel, *Salem – Congregations of the Faithful: A History of Salem Methodist Church, 1841-1991* (St. Louis: Robert S. Appel, 1991), 2-4.
[5] Ibid., 7-13.
[6] Friesen and Schatzberg, *The German Contribution*, 292-293; Audrey L. Olson, "St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and Its Relation to the Assimilation Process" (dissertation, University of Kansas, 1980), 24; Rodabough, *Frenchtown*, 23-24, 53-62.
[7] Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 24.
[8] Ibid; Wm. L. Montague, *The Saint Louis Business Directory for 1853-4* (Saint Louis: E.A. Lewis, 1853).
[9] Appel, *Salem,* 9.
[10] Ibid, 10.
[11] Ibid. 11.
[12] James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis Missouri, 1761-1980*, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998), 7-9, 164-173; Rodabough, *Frenchtown*, 23-24, 53-62.
[13] Ernst D. Kargau, *Mercantile, Industrial and Professional Saint Louis* (St. Louis: Nixon-Jones Printing Co., 1902), 39-40.
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[15] Berkin, Miller, Cherny, and Gormly, *Making America,* 342-343, 394-395.
[16] Appel, *Salem,* 10.
[17] John Wesley, "The Use of Money," *Global Ministries: The United Methodist Church*, February 27, 2013, http://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/Global-Worship-and-Spiritual-Growth/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-50-The-Use-of-Money.
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[19] Appel, *Salem,* 14.
[20] Ibid, 53-54.
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[25] "Warrants for Sunday Violators," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 18, 1895; "Sunday and the Saloons," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 19, 1895; "Will Close Up the Town: State Sunday Law to be Enforced to the Limit," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 19, 1895; "Carl Unger Out of Town: Therefore Sabbath-Breakers May Rest in Peace," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 20, 1895.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Daniel Okrent, "The Man Who Turned Off The Taps," *Smithsonian* (May 2010): 35.

[28]Appel, *Salem,* 58-60.

[29] Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 91-101, 134; Friesen and Schatzberg, eds., *The German Contribution,* 303.

[30] Appel, *Salem,* 49.

[31] "German-American Veterans," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* June 3, 1885.

[32] Jim Merkel, *Beer, Brats, and Baseball: St. Louis Germans* (St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2012), 52.

[33] Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 176-177.

[34] Ibid, 191.

[35] Appel, *Salem,* 58-60.

[36] Michael Warner, "The Kaiser Sows Destruction: Protecting the Homeland the First Time Around," *Center for the Study of Intelligence Journal* 46, no. 1 (April 2007): 1, www.cia.gov/library.

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A Country Girl In Africa: The Story Of An A-3

Avis Morton

In the early 1950s, I would go to a country church near our home with a neighbor and her mother. At that small church, there was a piece of wood cut to the shape of Africa and painted black. In this outline map of Africa were drilled a lot of small holes. A light behind the wood shone pin-points of light all over Africa. We were told frequently that the holes represented where the church was "bringing light to the Dark Continent." That image made me puzzle in my 10-year-old mind what it must be like there. The pictures I saw in *National Geographic* didn't look like it was dark there. I had to go see it for myself.

During my senior year of high school the minister of the Methodist church I attended told me about short term missionaries, in this case the A-3 program. That was the answer to how I would get to Africa! Four years later, I was asked to attend a missions program at the Deaconess College in Kansas City. I immediately signed up to start the process of application to become an A-3. Many interviews later, and with a completed degree in Home Economics Education, I was on my way. My first stop was Terre Haute, Indiana, for a gathering of furloughed missionaries and the newest set of three-year-term missionaries. Training for that group would take place at Stony Point, New York.

Field trips to New York City for conversations with the Women's Division of the Board of World Missions, shots, and R & R occasioned my first and probably deepest culture shock. Trees on top of buildings that were home to more people than lived in the entire county in Kansas that I called home; poor people beyond my imagination and something going on day and night seemed very strange to me.

Training was church camp on steroids. We had intense (everything in the 60s was intense) sessions in theology and mission history, reflections and humility. A few weeks at home gave me the time to gather three years of clothing, personal items and treasures (my indispensable wine bottles on which to drip candle wax and use for boiled drinking water in my residence; three containers in all. How does one calculate how many tubes of toothpaste, how many toothbrushes and do I need to take a spare pair of glasses? How much can one pack into one trunk and three barrels?

At that time it was customary to give missionaries two to three weeks to travel to whatever assignment they were given. Since going to Liberia did not require language training we were given a luxury liner voyage from New York to England. We stayed a week in England where I ventured alone into the city. My traveling partner met and stayed with her English pen pal. Our next step was to fly to Liberia with a layover of nearly a day in Lisbon, Portugal, in yet another wonderful hotel. All this seemed to me to be a lot of pampering. Surely, I thought, it will become more "sacrificial" soon. How does one do missionary work in the midst of such comfort and excitement?

Upon arrival in Liberia I found that the Bishop (not in residence) had assigned me to teach Home Economics at the College of West Africa, a junior/senior high school in the capital city. He must not have known that they had two perfectly capable and, more appropriately, Liberian teachers for that assignment. Imagine the letdown that a western Kansas "save the world" young person would experience when told, "it is nice to have you here, but we do not need you."

Since no one else had the authority to assign me to a permanent position, I did this and that as it was needed. Later the newly appointed (and first native person to be appointed) bishop assigned me to all the jobs I was doing. Little did I know what a variety of things could present themselves. I taught chemistry, biology, general science, and Bible. The girls' hostel needed a business manager, and assistant directress, a dietician, and general "fix things that broke" person. After 6 months of this exhausting schedule I became ill and spent three weeks up-country at the Methodist Mission where there were medical people with all sorts of useful medications and lots of time to rest. When I got better and was able to try again I got to help with the chores around that mission: delivering persons from here to there and assisting with all sorts of things like going to the leper colony to help the nurse. This became the pattern of my life in Liberia. I came home after two years to continue to heal and grow.

I was so fortunate to become an "adopted daughter" of a wonderful woman and her family. Nancy Nah was the Nutritional Specialist for the government of Liberia as well as one of the key nationals in the running of the mission in Monrovia. She was a product of missionary efforts many years earlier. Her parents sent her to the mission in Monrovia to be raised by a missionary and sent on to the United States to study

chemistry and nutrition in Kansas and Iowa. She taught me more about the mission purpose, Liberian culture and life in general than almost anyone in my life. I got to work with her as she worked with women in Liberia to help them better themselves. I was privileged to teach women to run hand-wheel sewing machines that had been sent to them by UNICEF. Since they were shipped "some assembly required" my farm training came in handy.

Grocery shopping for the hostel was an incredible experience of open markets, ship yard acquisitions of rice, and occasional cattle and goat purchases processed on site. Being the "one in charge" I certainly learned a lot about procurement if not production (my peanut patch never grew).

Working with the school children ranging in age from 5 to 25 was exciting and also frustrating. English was the official language and there were probably 5 native languages spoken all the time. I had to learn to understand new idioms, enjoy and participate in so many things that at first were very strange. In time they became and remain a part of me. When I returned to my family they thought I talked strangely and used odd references.

Living and working in Liberia afforded a different perspective from any other African country in that President Tubman was a lay minister in the Methodist Church and was very close to the church and those who worked with it. We were guests in the mansion and had his children in the schools. School was dismissed whenever he came back to the country and the children stood at attention as he passed by.

There were times of travel and exploration both within Liberia and through West Africa. We watched the gathering and processing of raw rubber, watched some of the richest iron ore in the world be mined and shipped out of the country. I was, however, restricted from walking freely in the small diamond mining industry. We went to the edge of the Sahara desert and decided that as the Biafran/Nigerian war broke out that we might be out of order traveling there. One trip involved going to the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal. Experiencing that sort of celebration and being in a Muslim country at Easter opened yet other perspectives on the world and its people.

Two years on the west coast of Africa, 8 degrees north of the Equator, was not the sacrifice I had been taught as a child looking at the model of the "Dark Continent."

Sure, I got sick. Yes, yes I had malaria more than once and some other ugly maladies, But without what I learned, how I was treated, and the work I did I could never have been what I became. I believe those years taught me what my life's work should be. I continue to work towards humility and service in the world right here where I am.

A YOUNG PREACHER, WM. MCKENDREE, AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1820

JOHN O. GOOCH

We don't know anything about Andrew Monroe's childhood, whether being the youngest in a large family was a blessing or a trial. We do know his father died when he was a small boy, and he was raised by his mother. Somewhere between 1792 and 1812, the family moved to Ohio, part of the great migration to the old northwest. It was in Ohio in the year 1812 that Monroe was converted to faith in Jesus Christ under the ministry of a William Lamden. The year 1812 was significant in many ways. The young United States was caught up in the camp meeting movement on the frontier, with highly emotional conversions and great enthusiasm for the church. The camp meetings brought thousands to Christ in a setting that was, at the same time, religious revival, social gathering and community building. The revivals were intensified by the almost apocalyptic events surrounding the New Madrid earthquake of December, 1811. What would have been a disaster in a more densely populated area still brought terror to a great deal of the country. Great chasms appeared in the earth, farms and homes were swallowed up, and the Mississippi River ran "backwards" for a time from the force of the earthquake. Island # 94, near Vicksburg, Mississippi, disappeared. The banks of the Mississippi caved as far north as Herculaneum, just south of St. Louis, and the banks of the Ohio upstream from the mouth of the Wabash did the same. Shocks were felt as far away as the Mandan towns in Dakota, in Detroit, Washington, and Boston (1,100 miles away).[1] The writer was even told by a National Park Service Ranger at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia that the earthquake "rang the bell." In the area around the epicenter, there was thick fog and darkness, with strong odors of sulphur and decay. The source of the odors was probably decaying vegetation in the silt deposits along the river bottom that were released by the quake, but to the settlers in that area, the stench was the very breath of hell itself. In addition, the earthquake apparently triggered huge thunderstorms and the lightning and thunder added to the apocalyptic scene. Many persons felt that the end of the world was at hand.

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[1] See John O. Gooch, "The New Madrid Earthquake and Missouri Methodism," *Toward the Setting Sun,* Volume VIII, No. 1, Fall, 1989. Also Myron L. Fuller, The New Madrid Earthquake. Government Printing Office, 1912. Reprinted 1960 by Ramfire Press, Cape Girardeau, MO. p. 10

This was also the year of the outbreak of the War of 1812 with Great Britain. On the frontier, the British stirred up the Indian nations to attack the American settlements, which added the element of fear to the already highly emotional atmosphere in the West. Since Ohio was a major target for British and Indian raids, the Monroe family could not have been immune to the elements of fear added to an already volatile emotional climate. In the midst of apocalyptic natural disasters and the depredations of war, coupled with the enthusiasm of the camp meetings, Andrew Monroe was converted to full faith.

Monroe was 20 at the time of his conversion. Three years later, in 1815, he joined his older brothers in seeking to become part of the traveling Methodist ministry. He was licensed to preach by a quarterly conference in the Zanesville (Ohio) District. He traveled as junior preacher on the Fairfield Circuit in Ohio, until the fall, when he was admitted on trial and appointed to the Cumberland Circuit in the Salt River District, a part of the Tennessee Conference. Bishop Francis Asbury presided over that session of the Ohio Conference, and was thus the first bishop to appoint Andrew Monroe to a circuit. This appointment put Monroe in touch with the founding of American Methodism, in the person of Bishop Asbury. His relationship with Asbury, fleeting though it was (Asbury died the next year) was the first of many significant events in Methodist history of which Monroe was a part.

While Monroe was taking the first tentative steps in ministry, the General Conference of 1816 was taking action that would have a profound affect on his life. That year, the Missouri Conference was organized. It included not only the state of Missouri, but Illinois, Indiana, and Arkansas as well. In just a few years, Missouri would become for Monroe the field of labor and love for the bulk of his life.

Young preachers with a burning passion for the Lord and for the church show results from their labors. Monroe was no exception. When he was appointed to the Cumberland Circuit, it had 220 white members. A year later, he reported 236, a modest gain but also a harbinger of what was to come. In 1817, he was appointed to the Jefferson Circuit, still in the Tennessee Conference, along with William Adams. Jefferson had 591 white members, and 71 colored. [2] A year later, the circuit reported

[2] Recognizing that the term "colored" will be read as insensitive by some, it must be said that is the way the General Minutes report members of African origin during this early period. The choice to leave the

732 white members and 104 colored. Given the times, and the area (the frontier south) in which the circuits were located, these colored members were probably predominantly slaves. There may have been a few freedmen and women, but likely they were a small minority. The numbers indicate a 24% increase in the white membership and 46% in the colored membership. The clearest example of Monroe's abilities and passion is seen in the 1820 report of the Fountain Head Circuit, located in Kentucky, but still a part of the Tennessee Conference. This circuit had 567 white and 37 colored members when Monroe was appointed there in 1819. The 1820 minutes show an increase to 892 white and 48 colored members. Monroe himself says that this was "a year of much glorious revivals...and so many young converts."[3] Unfortunately, he does not give us any details of the revivals or of his work. Later in his life, he was a strong proponent of the camp meeting, so we can guess that camp meetings played a prominent part in the "glorious revivals."

Elmer T. Clark summarized the spirit of the early circuit riders in an historical address given at the 1960 session of the St. Louis Annual Conference.

1. They were primarily evangelists.
2. They spoke the definite and concrete language of the people.
3. They disregarded themselves, their physical welfare, and the desires for a normal life.
4. They were to build up holiness.
5. They were careful about instructing children.
6. They insisted on strict morality.[4]

Monroe, from all the evidence of these early years and from comments he makes throughout his ministry in Missouri, fit the profile that Clark has outlined. Even in his seventies, and with an appointment that called for him to be raising funds for missions, Monroe's emphasis was on preaching, revivals, and church growth.

It is at the meeting of the Tennessee Annual Conference of 1819 that we first begin to see Monroe as a person and not just a shadowy figure in the statistical

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language as it is found in the source documents was made after careful thought, and with apologies to those who find it offensive.

[3] Andrew Monroe, Recollections of the Reverend Andrew Monroe (1792-1871) covering his ministry for the years 1819 to 1870. Transcribed by Louise Stahl from the original manuscript in the Clark Collection in the World Methodist Building at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. p. 1

[4] Elmer T. Clark, "Early Methodism in Missouri," Journal of the St. Louis Annual Conference (1960), pp. 105-107

report. He reports that the state of Kentucky was divided between the Ohio and Tennessee Conferences (the Kentucky Conference came into being at the General Conference of 1820). The preachers from Kentucky and those from Tennessee were divided on the issue of slavery, which, he says, led to "some warm debating in the conference, producing some unpleasant feeling, especially on the part of the minority when they saw that the other party was determined to carry everything in their own way." [5] This was also the conference at which General Conference delegates were to be elected. Bishop Enoch George, who was presiding over the session of the Annual Conference, was disturbed by all the rancor. He detained several of the (anti-slavery) majority after the close of a session and "gave them a plain talk and wholesome counsel as to their course, especially touching the election of delegates."[6] This "plain talk" probably had to do with the majority riding rough-shod over the minority in the matter of electing delegates based on attitudes toward slavery. One can only imagine how the preachers must have felt about this. Frontiersmen, by and large, did not take kindly to "plain talk" from persons in authority. Peter Cartwright, one of those "invited" to the talk said, "'Bishop,' said he, 'when we meet on the floor of the General Conference, I will be as big a man as you.'" Here the Bishop reminded him he might not be there. Cartwright replied in that classic style for which he was rather distinguished all his life, "Bishop, I will go as slick as a peeled onion."[7] Cartwright's comment is a reflection of the "not taking kindly to plain talk" and a reminder that all votes were equal on the floor of the General Conference.

On the first ballot, Monroe remembers, five were elected, including Cartwright. After several ballots, Monroe himself was elected. This was an embarrassment to him, as he had been ordained elder and admitted to full conference membership only the day before. His surmise was that he was chosen because he was associated with the Kentucky preachers, and truly believed slavery was wrong. That was the way he had been raised. Nevertheless, he was elected as a member of the General Conference. What is interesting is that he immediately reports that his travels with Bishop William McKendree, and the conversations on the subject of slavery, led him to change his mind. In addition, he says, the "great speech of Reverend William Capers in General

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[5] Recollections, p. 1
[6] Loc. Cit.
[7] Loc.cit

Conference of '20, led me to adopt very different views of the whole matter, and every year has confirmed me in my views."[8] We don't know what Capers said at the General Conference. We do know something of his views some 20 years later. Reading back is always a dangerous historical exercise, but one which may be justified in this instance. Among other things, Capers said that the New Testament never formally abolished slavery, so it must still be right for slavery to be practiced in the nineteenth century. He argued, further, that slavery could be seen as a positive good, lifting up the Africans from their wretched lives and, particularly, helping them to come to a knowledge of God. Plus, slavery was sanctioned by God, which was the ultimate authority for any good Methodist. [9] That was a fairly common argument for the legitimacy of slavery among southern clergy in the first half of the 19th century, however much we might disagree with it today.

At this annual conference, Monroe was appointed to the Bowling Green Circuit, in the state of Kentucky. Bowling Green was a new circuit, formed from appointments in the Fountain Head circuit, and made possible because of the great growth in Fountain Head the previous year. Whether because of the number of preaching appointments on the circuit that came from already strong churches, or because of Monroe's work, or both, Bowling Green reported 602 white and 52 colored members in 1821, in spite of the fact that there was little "local" help. By this, Monroe probably meant there were no local pastors in the new circuit, where there had been a large number in Fountain Head. He laid off a three weeks' circuit and entered enthusiastically into the work. His Recollections say more about the person of the Presiding Elder, C. Holliday, than about his own work. From the traits that he praised in Rev. Holliday, we can see something of the kind of man and preacher that Monroe admired and aspired to become. Monroe noted that his Presiding Elder was easy of access, companionable, cheerful, but never light. He had no time for jesting or foolish talking (all his life, Monroe was committed to being serious about his work). Holliday was a strong defender of Wesleyan doctrines and Methodist practices, "soft in language but hard in

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[8] Ibid., p.2

[9] See Kyle A. Painter, "The Pro-Slavery Argument in the Development of the American Methodist Church," *Constructing the Past,* Volume 2, No. 1, 2001 pp. 42-43. See also Harmon L. Smith, "William Capers and William A. Smith, *Methodist History,* 3, No. 1 (October 1964)

argument." [10] This kind of man Monroe admired and worked hard to emulate. He often criticized those who did not live up to the ideals he admired.

In the middle of the year, Bishop McKendree interrupted Monroe's ministry with a call to accompany him from the frontier to Washington City, where the bishop wanted to meet the Baltimore Conference in March. Monroe made arrangements for his circuit to be covered in his absence (this was going to be necessary anyway for his attendance at General Conference – the bishop's message merely moved it up two months.) and met McKendree near Gallatin in Tennessee. The Bishop had been very ill and was still feeble, which probably explains why he wanted a young preacher to travel with him. He had been so ill that he was reported dead and the preachers they met on their way to Baltimore were amazed to see him. Monroe worried about the late winter weather, not the best time for an ill man to be traveling on horseback through what was, in many areas, still wilderness for some 300 miles. He worried about the care of the horses, including a pack horse for the bishop's baggage, being sure the bishop took his medicine at the proper times, and whether or not he was the man for that job. But he also considered it an honor to be asked, and set himself, as he always did, to the task before him.

Robert Paine's Life of McKendree contains an account of the journey to Baltimore that Monroe gave him, but that Monroe did not include in his Recollections. According to this account, they averaged about twenty miles a day through bad roads and deep mud. This left McKendree so exhausted at night that he often had to be helped from his horse, but he was always ready to go in the morning. At every stop, he had "religious worship," which would have been at least a Bible reading and prayers, though occasionally Monroe reports a sermon. In Kingston, Tennessee, the Bishop preached a doctrinal sermon, in which "he gave predestination no quarter."[11] This was a common theme with Methodist preachers on the frontier, always competing with Baptists and Presbyterians, and others who believed in predestination, as opposed to the Wesleyan doctrine of free will. That night, Monroe was called on to preach "in the hearing of the Bishop, which was a great trial to me."[12] Certainly a young preacher in the company of

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[10] Recollections, p. 3
[11] Robert Paine, Life and Times of William McKendree, Volume II. Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. 1870.,p. 327
[12] Loc. Cit.

such a giant in the church as William McKendree would be reluctant and uneasy about preaching in his presence. But while we have no record of any of Monroe's sermons, his long list of converts suggests that he was a good preacher, and that he would have acquitted himself well in the situation.

Monroe mentions one incident on the trip which reveals something of both his own character and that of Bishop McKendree.

> In this connection, I will mention an incident which brings out one trait in the Bishop's character. We had been detained far beyond the usual time of starting; he had been worried, and his patience much tried.
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> I was perplexed in getting off, and forgot his canister of bark. After traveling about half a mile, he inquired if I had put it up, when I answered in the negative. He reined in his horse, took the lead-horse from me without saying a word, but in any thing but a pleasant manner. I returned immediately, and getting the forgotten medicine, soon overtook him. We traveled for several miles without speaking: he finally broke silence by remarking that, from long sickness and fatigue of the journey, he had become impatient; that he did not know how I bore with him; but if I would forgive him, he would try and do better.[13]

The reference to bark suggests that the Bishop's illness was malaria, and then Monroe adds that McKendree had an attack of asthma that evening. It is no wonder that Monroe was concerned about the responsibility he carried!

When the travelers arrived at the Potomac River, they had two problems. The first was that the horses, used to fording streams, found the bridge strange and frightening. Getting them to try the bridge was difficult. The other problem was a sudden snowstorm, which caught them in the middle of the bridge. It was apparently a mini-blizzard, since Monroe reports they could not see either side of the river. In spite of those handicaps, they reached land safely and found the seat of the conference in Georgetown.

After the meeting of the Baltimore Conference, there was still time before the General Conference met in Baltimore in May. Apparently, Monroe still had some

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[13] Ibid., pp. 327-328

responsibilities for the care of Bishop McKendree, and it is highly likely that he preached whenever he had the opportunity.

United Methodists who are familiar with the crowded agendas and hectic schedules of General Conference may be surprised to learn that, in those days, General Conference met daily at 10 am, and adjourned at 1 pm! Later on, they did add an afternoon session. Of course, some of the time was taken up with committee meetings. But, as Russell Richey reminds us, revival was an important part of conferences in those days, including the General Conference, and there was preaching and prayer meetings all over the city whenever there was a break in the conference action.[14]

We have already seen that slavery was one contentious issue at the 1820 General Conference, and that William Capers' great speech justifying slavery changed Monroe's mind on the subject. Another great issue at the conference was the question of how Presiding Elders would be chosen. Would they continue to be appointed by the bishops, and accountable only to them, or would they be elected by and accountable to the conference? In political terms, the question was this: were bishops a separate (executive) branch of the church, or were they part of the legislative (conference) branch? The movement to elect Presiding Elders was considered a "reform" movement, probably an expression of the wave of democracy then sweeping the country, as well as discontent with the authoritarianism of Asbury and, to a lesser extent, McKendree. A compromise was worked out by which Presiding Elders would be elected from a list of nominees, three times the number needed, submitted by the bishops. This passed by a roughly 2/3 vote. [15]

During the debate, Joshua Soule was elected to the office of bishop. Before his ordination (in those days, they called it an ordination, not a consecration) the Conference passed the "reform" vote, to elect presiding elders. Soule thought this was unconstitutional and stated that he could not serve as a bishop under such a ruling. Since Soule had essentially written the constitution of the church he thought he pretty well understood what it meant. In a letter to the conference, Soule said:

> I was elected under the constitution and government of the Methodist Episcopal Church UNIMPAIRED... I solemnly declare, and

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[14] See Russell E. Richey, The Methodist Conference in America: A History. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996

[15] Frederick A. Norwood, The Story of American Methodism. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974, p. 176

could appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of my intention, that I cannot act as Superintendent under the rules this day made and established by the General Conference.[16]

With the support of McKendree, Soule prevailed. After a long struggle, the conference tabled the issue of election of presiding elders until the next General Conference, but Soule continued in his refusal to become a bishop until the issue was settled. From that day until this, Presiding Elders (now District Superintendents) are appointed by the bishop, and not elected – though the movement for election still comes up on a fairly regular basis. A long-term result of this clash, which continued through General Conference of 1824, was the schism which led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church, another marker in the history of American Methodism where Monroe found himself involved.

We don't know to what extent Monroe was involved in the debates about presiding elders. After all, he was a young man at his first General Conference, which had a tradition of being dominated by older men with several elections to Conference. But the debate itself, and its ultimate outcome, would have long-lasting implications for Monroe, as for the entire church. Beginning in 1826, he would spend a total of 26 years as a Presiding Elder. By that time, the General Conference of 1824 had settled the issue in favor of appointment, and Soule was again elected as a Bishop. One wonders what a difference it might have made for Monroe's ministry had the results gone the other way. Either way, what an amazing introduction to the highest ranks of Methodist polity! What stories Monroe could have told to his fellow preachers in Kentucky if he had been the kind of man who told stories.

Another decision of the 1820 General Conference which would have far-reaching implications for Monroe's ministry and for the church as a whole, was the establishment of District Conferences to make a place in the church structure for local preachers, who were beginning to feel left out, being neither laity nor conference members in full connection. We shall see later the value Monroe would put on these conferences, and how he used them to good effect in his work as Presiding Elder. The Kentucky Conference was organized at this General Conference and Monroe became a member of it.

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[16] Richey, op. cit. p. 85

A young preacher, admitted to full membership in the conference one day and elected to General Conference the next! This would be only the first of many times that Monroe would be elected to General Conference, often as the head of the delegation from the Missouri Conference. Then he was called away from his circuit early to bear the responsibility of getting Bishop McKendree from the Nashville area to Baltimore for the General Conference. Since McKendree was ill at the time, and there were no fast trains or comfortable motels, this was not an easy task. Then came the excitement of General Conference, with the far-reaching results of debates and conflicts of personalities. It was quite an introduction to the larger structure of the church for a relative neophyte.